

United States Department of State

*Under Secretary of State  
for Political Affairs*

Washington, D.C. 20520

August 19, 1985



Dear Dr. Lederberg:


Thanks for your extensive notes on your recent meetings in the Soviet Union. I have passed them on to the State Department offices dealing with arms control matters, particularly chemical and biological warfare issues.

As you know, the Soviets are very caught up with the President's SDI program and how to respond to it. We hope that we can begin a constructive dialogue on how both our countries might cooperatively and in a stable manner move toward a deterrence system based increasingly on defensive systems and less on the threat of offensive nuclear retaliation. Progress in Geneva has been slow, but given the complexity and importance of the issues, we are about where we expected to be.

Your point that advances in medical research and technology may create a greater risk of biological warfare proliferation is troubling, and we will need to look at this more closely. As you note, Soviet BW capabilities remain a serious concern. The Administration's two reports on Soviet non-compliance with arms control agreements have referred to the problem of Soviet BW activities and the Soviet failure to provide adequate explanations. I appreciate your efforts to impress on your Soviet interlocutors the importance of the Sverdlovsk anthrax outbreak. The voices of respected American scientists and academic leaders such as yourself might help to persuade the Soviets that meaningful corrective steps toward compliance with their legal obligations need to be taken. Thanks for writing.

With best wishes,

Warm regards,

  
Michael H. Armacost

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
President,  
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CC: Victor/ERSAC